

## Brownlow, Kellie

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**From:** Brownlow, Kellie  
**Sent:** Monday, July 27, 2015 2:24 PM  
**To:** 'Chapman, Leroy (CMG-Atlanta)'  
**Cc:** Glennon, Amy (CMG-Atlanta); Riley, Kevin (CMG-Atlanta); Roughton Jr, Bert (CMG-Atlanta); Richardson, Monica (CMG-Atlanta); Waligore, Mark (CMG-Atlanta); Duncan, Todd (CMG-Atlanta); Klepal, Dan (CMG-Atlanta)  
**Subject:** RE: Chairman Lee  
**Attachments:** RE: Following up; RE: Ethics; Chairman Lee

Leroy,

Thank you for responding to my email. Given that we have had difficulty here I would prefer to keep this in writing if you don't mind.

We do want to find a way to work together going forward in a respectful and professional manner. Chairman Lee does not mind being criticized. In fact, other news outlets with whom we communicate regularly offer much criticism towards the Chairman without blatantly misreporting and misrepresenting him. Mr. Klepal has repeatedly proven that he cannot and will not do that. These last two instances are the most recent examples of a pattern of behavior. Thus, we would be willing to meet with representatives of the AJC as long as Mr. Klepal is not present. We prefer to keep all correspondence with him in writing given his tendency to repeatedly misrepresent Chairman Lee.

Just to clarify, we are asking for 2 corrections: One is on the story on July 15 about the changes in the ethics code for which you suggested you would be willing to consider and then never responded further. We subsequently made the same request of Dan Klepal and he dismissed the request outright (I have attached this email). Again, we have several witnesses including the county attorney who can attest to the fact that Chairman Lee was only asked a question about campaign finance in the exchange on July 14. Then, when I went to follow up with Mr. Klepal to see if there were any questions I could get answered for him, he again said he only had a question about campaign finance (presumably because he knew I would not be able to answer that question as it is out of my purview) only to write a story that suggested Chairman Lee refused to respond to a question about a proposed change in the county ethics code. **Is it the journalistic standard of the AJC for a reporter to state that an elected official refused to respond specifically to a question that was never asked?**

The other is on the BRT story on July 20. Contrary to your assertion in the previous email, Chairman Lee NEVER was directly asked questions for that story. NOT ONCE. In fact, Dan Klepal's email to me on July 16 (attached) says that he had "...several questions, which were submitted to Faye DiMassimo related to BRT that have gone unanswered for weeks." I responded that I do not manage media and communications for department heads. I again ask this question of you: **Is this the journalistic standard at the AJC that if you are copied on an email specifically addressed to someone else about something under their purview then you are responsible for answering the question?** I would like a clear answer to this question because, again, you cannot provide any proof that Chairman Lee was directly asked a question about this issue. You can only provide proof that Ms. DiMassimo was asked these questions on an email where the county manager, the county chairman and Todd Duncan were carbon copied. Therefore, we do not accept your unwillingness to correct the record about Chairman Lee refusing to comment on a story for which his comment was not requested. If you have proof that a question was posed directly to Chairman Lee I respectfully request you to produce it. I have attached your email response about this as well for your reference.

Again I want to remind you that Cobb is a county manager form of government. It is the job of the county manager, not the Chairman or commissioners, to manage staff. And, as Chairman's Chief Deputy, I am only responsible for media and

communications in the Office of the Chairman. I do not coordinate media contact or communications for the County Manager nor any of the county department heads.

Best Regards,

Kellie

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**From:** Chapman, Leroy (CMG-Atlanta) [mailto:Leroy.Chapman@ajc.com]  
**Sent:** Monday, July 27, 2015 9:13 AM  
**To:** Brownlow, Kellie  
**Cc:** Glennon, Amy (CMG-Atlanta); Riley, Kevin (CMG-Atlanta); Roughton Jr, Bert (CMG-Atlanta); Richardson, Monica (CMG-Atlanta); Waligore, Mark (CMG-Atlanta); Duncan, Todd (CMG-Atlanta); Klepal, Dan (CMG-Atlanta)  
**Subject:** Chairman Lee

Ms. Brownlow,

I spent some time Saturday corralling each of your emails sent regarding your concerns over how we characterized Chairman Lee's response in the BRT story.

Going forward, it would be best if this conversation remains between you and me. A sprawling email conversation among a half dozen people tends to be unwieldy. I am empowered to speak on behalf of the leadership here at the AJC, which is copied on this email. I am sure you are empowered to speak on behalf of the chairman.

I am confident we can continue what had been a productive conversation. As I expressed to you previously, we are interested in having regular dialogue with Chairman Lee.

Just to recap, my last communication with you was an email in which I informed you that we determined a correction was not warranted on the BRT story. That decision was based on Dan's attempts to contact Chairman Lee via email and in person. Dan got no response to his email. When Dan approached Chairman Lee after a public meeting to discuss this, he was emphatic about his desire not to speak to Dan. Since then, you have raised some additional issues.

Let's set aside some time today to discuss in further detail why you think a correction is still required. Let's also see if we can set a time to get you and Chairman Lee in our newsroom. Again, I'd like to make that happen.

Our desire here is to serve our readers, who elected the Chairman and the rest of the commission to look out for their interests.

Let me know what will be a good time to call.

Best,

**From:** Brownlow, Kellie [<mailto:Kellie.Brownlow@cobbcounty.org>]

**Sent:** Friday, July 24, 2015 3:15 PM

**To:** Glennon, Amy (CMG-Atlanta); Riley, Kevin (CMG-Atlanta); Roughton Jr, Bert (CMG-Atlanta); Richardson, Monica (CMG-Atlanta); Waligore, Mark (CMG-Atlanta)

**Subject:** FW: Following up

AJC leadership team:

In addition to the email you just received from me, below is my most recent correspondence with Dan Klepal.

Thank you again for your attention to my concerns.

Respectfully,

Kellie Brownlow

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**From:** Brownlow, Kellie

**Sent:** Friday, July 24, 2015 3:13 PM

**To:** 'Klepal, Dan (CMG-Atlanta)'

**Cc:** 'Chapman, Leroy (CMG-Atlanta)'; Duncan, Todd (CMG-Atlanta)

**Subject:** RE: Following up

Dan,

I am trying here but you don't seem to be. If you refuse to make the correction to the misrepresentation in your story then we will have to insist that while we are happy to have a sit down with Chairman and AJC, it will have to be without you. We do not find you to be someone who will be fair. We will meet for 30 minutes with whomever at the AJC you want to send. Ms. Dimassimo works for the County Manager so you will need to work with him to arrange for a separate interview with her.

Kellie

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**From:** Klepal, Dan (CMG-Atlanta) [<mailto:Dan.Klepal@ajc.com>]  
**Sent:** Friday, July 24, 2015 11:30 AM  
**To:** Brownlow, Kellie  
**Cc:** Duncan, Todd (CMG-Atlanta)  
**Subject:** RE: Following up

Kellie:

I would also like to request that Faye DiMassimo attend the meeting. We will have a lot of transportation/infrastructure questions, and having DiMassimo there would be helpful and appropriate. If she can't attend the meeting with Lee, I would like to meet with her separately. Regardless, we'll need about 90 minutes.

The topics are BRT; traffic/parking around SunTrust Park; the Cumberland Circulator; Lee's campaign finance reports; the pedestrian-transit bridge. We can leave the campaign finance for last, so that you and DiMassimo can leave the room before we have that discussion.

I believe Todd will attend, depending on his schedule, so I am including him on this email.

In terms of your request for correction related to the ethics story, Leroy and Todd have determined none is warranted. I'm sorry if that wasn't clearly communicated to you. The reason is very simple: Lee said to me as I approached him after the last BOC meeting: "I'm not going to talk to you." A flat denial, regardless of topic. Then, as you know, he cut me off mid-sentence during my first question and was escorted out of the room by a police officer.

Sorry, but we don't offer corrections as "a good will gesture."

Could you please let us know the day and time of the meeting at your earliest convenience.

Thanks,

DK

**From:** Brownlow, Kellie [<mailto:Kellie.Brownlow@cobbcounty.org>]  
**Sent:** Friday, July 24, 2015 10:54 AM  
**To:** Klepal, Dan (CMG-Atlanta)  
**Subject:** Following up

Dan

Thank you for reaching out last night. We are interested in turning the page on our communications and I am open to setting up an interview with Chairman Lee.

The interview will follow a format similar what we do with the MDJ and I know that you guys also do with Gwinnett. It would be you, one of your editors (I know it's usually Todd or Leroy in Gwinnett), Chairman Lee and I. I also need a list of topics/sub topics you'd like to cover. This is to ensure we are prepared to answer your questions and that we make it a valuable use of your time.

As I mentioned to Leroy, I believe that relationships are a two way street with each party demonstrating a good faith effort. To that end, last week, I requested a correction to the article about the ethics code changes that acknowledged there was not a question posed to Chairman Lee specifically about ethics. No one has closed the loop with me on that request.

Do you think you can help get this done? I realize it is somewhat symbolic, being a week late and the fact that few readers pay attention to the corrections box in the A section. That said, I would appreciate it and consider it a good will gesture.

Let me know if this is something you can get done.

Thank you

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